

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Essentuki - about 1918

I have already said that there are people who are hungry and thirsty for truth. If they examine the problems of life and are sincere with regard to themselves, they will very soon become convinced that it is not possible to live as they have lived and to be what they have been till then. That a way out of this situation is essential.

That a man can develop his hidden capacities and powers only by cleaning his machine of dirt that has stuck to it in the course of life. But in order to undertake this cleaning in a more rational way, he has to see where, how and what should be cleaned; but to see this of oneself is almost impossible. In order to see anything one has to look from the outside; mutual help is necessary.

If you remember the example I gave (of identification) you will see how blind a man is when he identifies with his moods, feelings and thoughts. But is our dependence on things only limited to what can be observed at first glance? For these things are so much in relief that they cannot help catching the eye. You remember how he spoke about people's characters, roughly dividing them into bad and good. As a man gets to know himself, he continually finds new domains where his will, his "I wish" has no power, domains not subject to him, so confused and subtle that it is impossible to find one's way about in them without the help and authoritative guidance of someone who knows. This is briefly the state of things in the realm of self-knowledge: In order to do one must know; but to know one must find out HOW to know.

We cannot find this out by ourselves. Besides self-knowledge, there is another side of the search - self-development.

It is clear that here too a man left to his own devices cannot suck out of his little finger knowledge of how to develop himself and, still less, exactly what to develop in himself.

Gradually by meeting people who are searching and by talking to them and by reading relevant books, a man becomes drawn into the sphere of questions concerning self-development.

And what will he meet with there? First of all an abyss of the most unpardonable charlatanism. But before a man learns to divide the wheat from the tares a long time must elapse and perhaps the urge itself to find the truth will flicker and go out in him.

The more therefore a man studies the obstacles and deceits, which lie in wait for him at every step in this realm, the more he becomes convinced that it is impossible to travel the path of self-development following the chance instructions of chance people, or the kind of information culled from casual talk and from reading.

The Great Knowledge is successively handed on from age to age, from people to people, from race to race. The great centers of initiation in India, Assyria, Egypt, Greece illumine the world with a bright light. The revered names of two Great Initiates, the living bearers of truth, are handed down reverently from generation to generation. Truth is fixed by means of symbolical writings and legends and is thus transmitted to the crowd for preservation in the form of customs and different ceremonies. (In oral transmissions, in memorials, in sacred art, such as the invisible quality in dances, music, sculpture and various rituals and customs). After a definite trial it is communicated openly to those who seek it and is preserved by oral tradition in the chain of those who know. After a certain period has elapsed, these centers of initiation die out one after another and the ancient knowledge departs by underground channels into the deep hiding from the eyes of seekers.

The bearers of the knowledge also hide, become unknown to those surrounding them, but they do not cease to exist. From time to time separate streams break through to the surface, showing that somewhere deep down the powerful stream of ancient true knowledge and being continues to flow even in our day.

To break through to this stream, to find it, this is the task and the aim of the search: for, having found it, a man can entrust himself boldly to the way by which he intends to go: then there remains only to "do" in order "to know" and "to be".

And on this way a man will not be entirely alone. At difficult moments he will receive support and guidance, for all seekers who follow this way are linked together by an uninterrupted chain.

To a man who is searching with all his being, with all his inner self, comes an unfailing conviction that to find out how to know in order to do is possible only by finding a guide of experience and knowledge.

And it is here that a man's flair is more important than anywhere else. Every seeker usually dreams of such a guide, dreams about him, but seldom asks himself objectively and sincerely -- is he worthy of being guided? Is he ready to follow the way?

Ask yourself: what do you want? Where do you intend to go? What are you undertaking, and is what you want simply madness? Ask yourself of your aims and hopes, of your intentions and means of fulfilling them, of the demands which may be put on you and of your preparedness to meet them.

A difficult and long path is before you: you are preparing for a strange and unknown land. The way is infinitely long. You do not know whether rest is possible on the way or where it may be possible. You should be prepared for the worst.

Weigh up your strength. Is it sufficient for the whole journey? How soon can you start? Every minute is precious. Once having decided to go, there is no reason to waste time.

Do not reckon on trying to come back. This experiment may cost you very dear. The guide undertakes only to take you there and if you wish to turn back, he is not obliged to return with you. You will be left to yourself and woe to you if you weaken or forget the way. You will never get back. And even if you remember the way, the question still remains: will you return safe and sound? For many unpleasantnesses await the lonely traveller who is not familiar with the way and with the customs that prevail there. Bear in mind that your sight has the property of presenting distant objects as though they were close to you. Beguiled by the closeness of the aim towards which you strive, blinded by its beauty and ignorant of the measure of your own strength, you will not notice the obstacles on the way, you will not see the ditches which riddle the path. In a green meadow covered with luxuriant flowers, in the thick grass a deep precipice is hidden. It is very easy to stumble and fall over it if your eyes are not concentrated on the step you are making. DO not forget to concentrate all your attention on the nearest sector of the way -- do not concern yourself about far aims if you do not want to fall over the precipice.

Yet do not forget your aim. Remember about it the whole time and keep up in yourself an active endeavor towards it, so as not to lose the right direction. And once you have started be observant, because what you have passed through remains behind and will not appear again; so if you failed to notice it at the time, you never will notice it at all. Do not be over curious, nor waste time on things that attract your attention but do not deserve it.

Time is precious and should not be wasted on things which have no direct relation to your task.

Remember where you are and why you are here.

Do not spare yourself and remember that no effort is made in vain.

ON HYPNOTISM

Tiflis 1919

In Europe hypnotism is much spoken about and much used in medical treatment. However the knowledge of it is very superficial which explains the frequently unsuccessful outcome of the treatment.

It can be said that the curing of a sick man takes place entirely by chance if the hypnotist happens accidentally to do what the given patient needs.

Generally speaking there are three methods of hypnotising of which the third method, transference of thought, is entirely unknown in Europe.

The first method should really be called self-hypnosis, for it requires no power of any kind on the part of the hypnotist. He only has to know how to break the connection between the emotional and the thinking centers.

The complexities of the methods of hypnotism are determined by the number of possible combinations.

There are connections between all centers. In man's waking state, either the thinking or the emotional center is always active, while the other, as it were observes, and criticises it so as not to allow it to commit "stupidities". If there is no connection -- which means there is none of this criticism -- the man will do anything the center active at the moment happens to wish, which means he will commit many "stupidities" on sight.

The task of the hypnotist consists in breaking artificially for a time this connection and then in giving commands to one of the centers which will then carry out everything literally, since there will be no criticism on the part of the other center.

For an explanation of the connection between centers, it is useful to repeat the comparison, already given, of the human machine with a team consisting of carriage, horse, and driver. The connection between centers may be compared with the reins and the shafts.

But for an ignorant hypnotist there is another difficulty. In breaking the connection between centers he can, in ignorance, break the wrong one in which case his hypnosis will prove unsuccessful.

If, for example, in the case of a given patient, he must isolate the thinking center and he accidentally breaks precisely the connection which isolates the thinking center, his hypnosis will succeed; but if he breaks equally accidentally some other connection and isolates the emotional center, which does not understand words but understands, let us say, only images, then no matter what he may command in words, nothing will happen. This is the simple reason why patients are often not cured and say that hypnotism does not work.

When the hypnotist breaks the connection he tells the patient to do this and that; and since criticism of the other center is absent, the patient believes him and does as he is told. Even if the other center sees that something is not as it should be, it can do nothing and can change nothing, for owing to the broken connection it can send no commands to that center.

If something is commanded to a man when centers are disconnected, then every time he is in that state, the man, that is, the given center, will repeat it. Even some definite action, say a touch, may induce this same state in a man.

In this kind of hypnosis, the moving center is awake. The whole of a man's life is self-hypnosis or one man hypnotising another. We are puppets in the hands of people stronger than ourselves. We shall become stronger by making two centers, the thinking and the emotional, keep awake together for as long a time as possible.

The second method of hypnotism is possible only if the hypnotist possesses a certain definite power. In order to explain this, it is first of all necessary to say that every man has his own atmosphere, similar to the atmosphere surrounding the earth. A man is enveloped by an even layer of this atmosphere of a certain definite thickness. When a man is very interested in something, his atmosphere, that is, the rays of a certain kind of energy emanating from him, go, as it were, in the direction of his desire and the circumference of his atmosphere becomes drawn out on that side to the detriment of the other side. If the pull towards something is very strong, the whole atmosphere may be drawn out on one side to such an extent that it may be torn away from the man and not return to him again.

Generally, in the presence of a strong desire, the atmosphere is drawn out and becomes elongated in the direction of his desire.

With the hypnotist this emanation or pouring out of his energy is voluntary which means that he must have a reserve of energy and must know how to collect it.

In putting to sleep by this second method, the hypnotist saturates the patient with his own energy. The healthier a man is, the quicker does he become saturated or, as it were, weighed down by this energy and goes to sleep. The more sick a man is, the less of this energy he has, the more difficult it is to put him to sleep by this method.

When two people meet, this energy passes from the one who has less to the one who has more (this explains vampirism). Ordinarily this energy passes from one man to another involuntarily.

The third method is completely unknown in Europe. This is transference of thought, that is, transference of a certain definite matter. What is called transference of thought here is either charlatanism or lypnosof of the first kind of which we have spoken earlier.

THE HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE

Vaugirard, 1922 (Dictated)

The earliest beginning of the Institute can be considered to have been in 1895 when three tourists met by chance in Egypt by the pyramids. Finding that all the three were Russians they became close friends and decided to continue their tour of Egypt together. Their conversations while wandering up and down the Nile and over the excavations of ancient Thebes enabled each of them to realize that the questions they touched upon had, as proved later, interested all the three for some time past.

All the three had travelled a great deal before that meeting.

The first, Prince L., had already been in India, Tibet and Balochistan. Since he was wealthy and an ardent seeker, he had managed to visit places where no Europeans had penetrated before him. He had begun his travels ten years before, immediately after a misfortune that had visited him -- the loss of a loved person which made him take up spiritualism. Since he was a man of enquiring mind, the first enthusiasm soon gave place to serious search in these matters.

Finding nothing satisfactory in his surroundings and the available literature and influenced by the opinion current in Europe that India was the land of miracles where an answer to these questions could be found, he decided to go there. India disappointed him, but he did not lose hope of finding what he sought. From that moment his travels began, during which he only rarely came back to Russia on short visits.

The second was from his youth attracted to archeology. Since he was an energetic man, immediately on finishing his university course he was appointed assistant curator of a well known museum and was often sent on archeological expeditions. Before that meeting he had visited excavations at Delhi, in the valleys of Hindukush, Ani (Armenia), Babylon and others. At the moment he was with an archeological mission in old Thebes. Personally, however, he was chiefly interested in dolmens, about which he was collecting all the information he could, sparing neither time nor money.

The third and youngest of them, Gurdjieff, was chiefly interested in magic. Having chanced to spend his youth among such peoples as the Yezidis, the Aysores, the Appicles (or Annicles) he constantly came face to face with phenomena and traditions which no enquiring mind could ever pass by without innumerable questions.

The following may serve as illustrations of such phenomena. A circle traced round a Yezidi does not allow him to step over it, not because of religious superstition, but in actual fact. Among the Annicles a young girl to be married is subjected to certain manipulations after which she is thrown into the water, which results in a phenomenon inexplicable to European science -- the girl's weight proves lighter than water and she does not sink. If she sinks it is proof that she does not belong to the tribe. Aysores have a phenomenon of clairvoyance (egungashah). Investigations showed that not a single case of such clairvoyance proved false. And so on.

The critical, incredulous and at the same time enquiring mind of Gurdjieff could not pass by such phenomena without finding their explanation. With this purpose in mind he gave himself up to studies which would explain it all. He began to study physics, chemistry, mechanics, psychology, etc. But the study of all available literature brought him no desired result, for from the point of view of these sciences phenomena which interested him were against natural laws.

But this did not make the fact of their existence any the less real, and so Gurdjieff never abandoned his original desire. Giving up books, he began to look for people who could satisfy it. This was the beginning of his wanderings, which led him, before that meeting, to Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey. The same purpose brought him to Egypt. Exchanging their impressions

THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY

Man, the Machine
London 1922; Chicago 1924

You want to study psychology, but you have no psyche -- so how can you study what does not exist yet? You wish to know yourself as a man, but you are not a man yet, only a machine; so you must begin to study yourself as a machine. Psychology is only the study of other people's ideas; it is far better to study yourself than to study other people's fantasies. You want me to tell you many things and I also want to share with you what I know about man and his ways. But you could not understand what you want to know even if I told you. We have not the language.

Our ordinary language is made for simple things only. We have no words available for "higher" things. Words are necessary because we cannot yet understand one another without them. When you have learned to study your own machine, we will understand one another better.

When you study yourself you have to be able to concentrate your attention upon that part which you wish to observe. At present you cannot concentrate your attention because your emotional center will not be quiet. So your attention is governed by your emotions and not by you. Until you stop being governed by your emotions you cannot be impartial; therefore you cannot understand the meaning of words.

Everyone understands words according to the mood they happen to be in. If I am hungry the word "wish" means food for me; but if I am satisfied it means "sleep" or perhaps "sex". All the time the meaning of words is changing and people do not even notice it.

We need to speak about very important things. For example, we have to speak about why man exists. This belongs to real knowledge, and to speak about it we shall have to understand words differently. To know anything real we must know all. There is an ancient saying:

"To know means to know all. Not to know all means not to know. To know all is not impossible. It is necessary for this to know even very little. But to know that little one must know pretty much."

In this case, the very little we must know is that man does not exist for himself, he exists to transmit vibrations needed for the moon. Man is part of the life of the earth. The earth is surrounded by a film of organic life kept in balance by planets, earth and moon. Organic life is so strong that no one can change his situation by himself. Suppose that God wants to help us; He cannot. The earth is too small to be affected by God's Will. If the earth is too small, how much more man? Where then can we get the help we need?

You can be helped when you begin to know yourselves. So long as you do not know your machine, even if help is offered you cannot make use of it. You must begin by understanding the purpose of our functions. Our centers are receivers for different rates of vibration. The centers are not affected equally by all vibrations. Each center is a receiver and transmitting apparatus. Each one takes the vibrations corresponding to its own functions. At present you can only receive automatically without discrimination. You do not know what you are taking in and so you can only transmit mechanically.

This gives nothing for yourselves.

Suppose you wish to transmit something consciously; you cannot because your mind will not be quiet. To stop the mind wandering, you must now use force, but you have not sufficient force; therefore you cannot do what you wish. Later, you can learn mechanical ways to stop the mind wandering, and then perhaps you can use your own force to do what you need to do.

All your energy that is not needed for keeping alive is taken by imagination and other useless activities. Observing your imagination that is, all the inner conversations and pictures that enter your mind without your own intention -- will help. Because when you observe, you draw away some of the energy from the imagination into force from which self-observation comes. In this way, that force can grow and one happy day you will find that you have an independent being in yourself that will be able to do what he wishes to do.

For the present, you must understand that you cannot observe whatever you wish. Your observation is limited by the associations already present in you. In a newborn child, each of the centers are free to respond to all the impressions that enter. It is like a system of blank gramophone rolls. From the day of this child's appearance in God's world, the external significance of objects and his own inner experiences are recorded on these rolls in accordance with the correspondence between the impressions and the material of which the different centers are made. This "material", which is really a kind of energy, has the possibility of absorbing corresponding vibrations and rejecting others.

In this way, certain places in each of the three brains of man get filled up with families of impressions grouped together by their similarity, or by the accident of being received together. Little by little, these become the habitual features that make up the personality. These features belong to all the centers, but the ones in the body are more stable. This is why you can study a man better by his postures and gestures than by what he says.

I will give you an example. Each man or woman has his own bodily postures and gestures, but these are connected with the mental and emotional habits and features which we cannot see. So to understand this, we must take something that many people do. Observe how people dance. Each nationality has its own way of dancing. You can always tell the nationality by the way a man dances. In the East, where traditions are much stronger, you can even tell which tribe or village people come from by the way they dance. In this way dances become like a kind of language by which people -- unconsciously, of course -- tell us about themselves.

It is the same with everything. Each nation has a limited repertoire of movements which come from the impressions of childhood. Because of this there is also a limited repertoire of thought. Even the feelings take on their own habitual features, which fix for the whole of the rest of the life the ways in which a person can feel. After childhood, very little can be changed. Unless special measures are taken, about which we will talk later, the capacity to get new impressions weakens with age. Children receive new impressions, but older people cannot; therefore in later life all that can be experienced is the arousing and recombination of these old impressions from childhood. Really new impressions can be obtained only by

violence, because the rolls in the centers are already covered up. It is difficult to penetrate to them because our force is limited. Nevertheless, there always remains in man a place where impressions can be received, providing these are taken in with a sufficient intensity. This place remains free -- until adult life begins; if it has not received impressions before then, it is very hard to reach it. For many of you who are here now, this place is already almost impossible to reach. It will need great effort if you are to begin a new life.

At present all new impressions fail to enter. They merely start the rolls turning in the centers by a mechanical action which you cannot even observe. That is why you have no conscious control over your energy. All your energy is mechanically acquired and mechanically spent. There are methods for getting new energy, but you have to dig for it, like getting rocks out of a quarry. You must take your pick-axe and pound. Even when you have the rock, it must be broken to powder so that you can get precious metal out of it. People are not willing to work like this, and so they live their lives with only the energy which comes to them mechanically. This is enough to keep you alive, but it is not enough for conscious "doing". If you wish to do anything effective, you must acquire more energy. But you have not got enough decision to work in this way. You cannot get more energy alone. Who is to apply the red pepper or stick the pitchfork you-know-where?

If you are not willing for this, everything will remain the same.

You think you learn something new, but you only listen to your own thoughts and associations. As I am speaking to you now, you think you are learning something; but that would mean having new thoughts, and new thoughts are impossible for you until you have a new force. If you wish to change something, the old methods will not help you. New methods are necessary. You try to think about what I say but your thinking is hindered by your feeling and instinctive centers. If you want to get new thoughts, these can only come if you change the other two centers. For this, super force is necessary, and your machine will not stand this unless it is prepared. Nothing has been connected with you all your life. The connections are now rusty. They must be greased -- but what will get the grease into the joints? You have to make the machine turn, but it has lost the habit.

You must understand that the connections exist, but it is you that have let them grow rusty. Even the weakest has more force than is necessary for life. You could make the machine turn and grease the rusty parts if you did not waste all the energy. But more than three quarters of your energy is wasted without even serving the purposes of life. With a quarter of the energy you could do everything that you need to do in life and have a surplus for work. But you waste it on imagination, unnecessary muscular tensions, emotional tensions, and so on. The first thing you have to learn is to save the energy you waste in this way and use it for conscious work.

The starting point is relaxation. Until you learn how to relax, you cannot save energy. At first to relax needs energy. Now you cannot relax without attention. If you use your attention for some time, you will begin to relax by habit. Then you can use your attention for something else. Your machine can do many things for you if you will let it. But you do not allow it to work for you. Your machine creates the energy needed for its own existence. It even creates a little more for you to use in your external life. Now you cannot use this energy because it is all wasted in your feelings. You do not even know what your feelings are. You do not understand that it is possible to create feelings through thought. At present it is the other way round: your thoughts are the slaves of your feelings, but you do not know it. All our moods are the results of our experiences. Therefore one who is trained can read all the past experiences of a person by observing his moods. If we learn to trace in ourselves the original associations from which our different feelings come, then we can create any emotion we wish.

Today you have a thousand "i's". Each weakness is an "i" that can at any moment make itself your master. To have your own "I" it is necessary for it to be born. It has been conceived because you have allowed the work to enter in you. It will not grow by itself; it must be fed so that it can accumulate substance and one happy day take form. Then it can develop and be born.

This substance of "I" comes only from intentional suffering.

When, for instance, you wish strongly for a cigarette and deny yourself, you will suffer inwardly. Then say: "I wish to make this inward force my own force." "I wish to receive this substance of my intentional suffering for my own 'I'" By this means you can become an Individual and go on the path that leads to the perfected man.

A sign of the perfected man and his chief particularity in ordinary life is that, in regard to everything happening outside of him, he can, as a splendid actor, perform to perfection externally the part corresponding to the given situation and, at the same time, internally never be identified or agree with it.

In my youth I, too, as you more or less know, being convinced of the truth of that, worked on myself very, very much in order to attain such a blessing which, as I thought, was predetermined by Heaven. After enormous efforts and continuous rejection of nearly everything deserved in ordinary life, I finally attained to such a point that nothing from the outside could really touch me internally; and, as far as acting is concerned, I brought my parts to such an ideal perfection as was never dreamed of by the learned people of ancient Babylon when they were manifesting as actors on the stage.

I must warn you that you cannot attain to such blessings if you insist in clinging to your present joys. Look back on your life and see what good has come to you from past joys. They are as useless to you today as the snows of last year which have melted and left no trace by which one can remember what they were. Only the imprints of conscious labor and intentional suffering are real and can be used in the future for obtaining good.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

(Originally read as "Pure and Impure Emotions")

What is the meaning of life? There are many opinions on this subject. They say: it is for the perfecting of self, or the sacrifice of self, or a preparation for future life, or an improvement of humanity, or even that it has no meaning at all. All these opinions look for the meaning of life outside of life itself. One must look inside oneself. The true sense of life is "connaissance". All life, all experience, leads to "connaissance".

The world is everything existing. Man, in becoming conscious, becomes conscious of himself and of the world of which he is a part. The function of consciousness is to become aware of his, and its, existence. One's relation with oneself and with the world -- this is "connaissance", or knowledge.

All the elements of the psyche of man -- perceptions, sensations, conceptions, ideas, emotions, creation, are instruments of knowledge. All emotions, from the simplest to the most complicated religious, moral, artistic -- all are instruments of knowledge.

According to the theory of the "struggle for existence" it is the survival of the fittest which creates intellect and emotions, and these serve life. In fact these are not accidental; they play a role in creation and are the product of an intelligence of which we know nothing: and they lead to knowledge. But we do not discern the presence of the rational in phenomena and in the laws of life. We study a part and not the whole. When we understand that each life is a manifestation of a part of the whole, the possibility of understanding will open up.

To understand the rationality of the whole, it is necessary to understand the character of all, and all its functions. The function of man is knowledge: but if one does not understand man as a whole, one will not understand his function.

Our separate lives are the manifestation of some large entity. A tree is a manifestation of the psychic reign of the animal kingdom. Our lives have no other sense than the process by which we acquire knowledge. The process of the acquisition of knowledge is not only by intellect but by our whole organism and organization of life, culture, civilization. And we acquire the knowledge of what we deserve to know.

Everyone agrees that the aim of intellect is knowledge. But we are not clear about our emotions -- joy, anger, jealousy, pleasure, artistic creation; we do not see that all activity, all emotions, serve knowledge. We believe that creation demands knowledge, but how does it serve knowledge? How do religious emotions serve knowledge?

We oppose emotion and reason. We speak of cold reason, of intellect superior to emotion. This is an error in definition. Intellect taken as a whole is also emotion.

We have a habit of saying that it is possible to conquer sentiment by reason, or will, or duty. A sentiment can only be conquered by another sentiment -- a stronger, superior sentiment. A soldier dies for his country not by habit of obedience, or duty, but because the sentiment of fear has been conquered by superior sentiments.

Reason provokes thoughts whose images evoke feelings which conquer a special sentiment. Reason has no limits -- only humans have limits. True reason is the inner aspect of a being.

In man the growth of conscience consists in the growth of the intellect and the growth of superior emotions which accompany it (aesthetic, religious, moral); in growing they become more intellectual and, at the same time, the intellect assimilates the emotions. "Spirituality" is a fusion of intellect with superior emotions.

A new order or receptivity comes from the union of intellect and superior emotions, but is not created by them. A tree springs from the ground, but is not created by earth. A grain is necessary. A grain may be there or not. If it is there, then it can be cultivated.

Man today understands much with intellect, but also with sentiments. With each sentiment man understands something which he could not understand without its aid. If we think that emotions serve life and not knowledge, we will never understand emotions. There are things and relations which can only be understood emotionally, and only with certain emotions. One must love in order to understand someone who loves, etc.

We do not know each other because we live with different sentiments (emotions). The same sentiments give the same understanding. Mutual understanding -- or the illusion of mutual understanding -- is the charm of love.

Emotions are the windows of the soul -- colored glass through which the soul regards the world. Partial illumination -- partial perception. There is nothing so clear, nothing more deceptive, than emotions. Each sentiment has a reason for being. Certain ones are important for knowledge, others hinder; though theoretically all emotions serve knowledge. For example, fear: certain relations are known only through fear; that is nature's way of controlling the forces of life: fear of hunger makes one work. Look at the attitude of the mammifer toward the serpent: the serpent provokes fear and repulsion. By that fear the mammifer knows the nature of the serpent and the relation of that nature to his own correctly, but strictly personally. But what the serpent really is, the mammifer cannot know through the emotion of fear; he can know that only by intellect.

Changing emotions are obstacles to the acquisition of a permanent "I". The sign of the growth of emotion is the liberation from the personal element. Personal emotion fools, is partial, unjust.

Greater knowledge is in proportion to fewer personal elements. The problem is to feel impersonally. Not all emotions are easily freed of the personal. Certain ones by their nature corrupt, separate; others, like love, lead man from the material to the miraculous.

There can be an impersonal envy; for example, envy of one who has conquered himself. An impersonal hate; the hate of injustice, of brutality. Impersonal anger -- against stupidity, hypocrisy.

It is current to talk about "pure" and "impure" emotions; but we do not know how to define their difference. A pure emotion is one which is not mixed, which never seeks personal profit. An impure

emotion is always mixed, it is never one; it is mixed with personal profit, with personal elements; it has sediments of other emotions.

An impure emotion does not give knowledge or gives only confused knowledge. It sheds no light. (We are considering impure sentiments from the point of view generally called "moral".)

Each emotion can be pure or impure; that is, mixed or unmixed.

Jealousy, envy, love of country, fear -- these can be pure feelings. There is even a sensuality which can be pure -- as that of the song of songs, which gives the pulse of the physical movement of the universe.

Love of science can be pure, or mixed with personal profit. The external manifestations of pure and impure emotions may be the same. For example, two men playing chess: their exterior aspect is the same, but one is only concerned with resolving a problem, and the other seeks a personal profit. The same is true in art, literature, etc.

The love of activity is a worthy sentiment when it is pure. But what happens, invariably, is that it becomes mixed. A person starts with a certain aim, but in the course of action the direction changes. Pride, vanity, personal ambition enter in. As soon as one wishes to draw a personal profit from his activity, the sentiment becomes impure. That is what happens to our most elevated feelings -love, faith, charity. They become mixed with personal elements; they become impure.

And the purity of sentiment is not confined to goodness and gentleness. We see hate and violence in the gesture of Christ when he drives the money-changers out of the temple. Hate can be a pure feeling. But it must have nothing personal attached to it.

All creation, all forms of art, were originally instruments of knowledge.

ECSTASY OF REVELATION

Today I have finished writing this first book of mine dedicated to the revered Beelzebub, and now I wish to write an epilogue, or as other writers call it "From the Author". I wish to do this because, as I have already said in the Forward of the book, I have observed that all writers do it, that is, they write something for themselves and call it an afterword or "From the Author". This is why I also wish to write something of this kind at the end of this, my Beelzebub book.

As I have already told you, I do everything not as everybody does. I shall therefore, first of all, call this not what all other writers do, I shall call it neither "Afterword" nor "From the Author", but nothing more nor less than "Ecstasy of Revelation".

Now I will begin to write the text ... and so with the help of the highest and lowest forces I begin...

Well! What shall I write? Yes, first of all I must say why I call it "Ecstasy of Revelation". I call it so because I have now, as usual -- I don't know why -- the illness of speaking sincerely. I have had this illness several times during my life, and although I know by this time quite well how this sincerity of mine will end, and I know it very well because I have already had much experience in getting for this sincerity what even Maker refused to accept, nevertheless I must speak, or in this case write, because I cannot do otherwise ...

It is surely known to you that this "Ecstasy" does not depend on my will but, in a word, on my illness. I hope that after having read this first book of mine you will understand that I am one of those people who love sincerity, and so I shall write something very sincere.

Please speak the truth my precious buyer of my books: do you like sincerity? What? ... You say that you like it very much? Certainly every man says so -- I know it! -- but how do you feel inside when a truth is

told you? .. I know that also very well! ... What? ... Not quite like that? ... Well then! I will explain it to you at once! You say that as a rule you are pleased when you are spoken to sincerely. May I tell you that although you always say so, yet in reality you always lie. You do not like it and you never did like it when the truth is told to you to your face. You are accustomed to like only flattery and the titillation of your self-love. Every revelation made to you always spoils your appetite and your blissfully peaceful mood for several days.

Then listen! For example, you, with all the fibers of my soul, as it is said, I hate you! It is all the same whoever you are -- man or woman, young or old, in a word, if you are a human being -- I hate you!!! Now you will only be eaten up by curiosity why have I this hate for man? Well, I will also explain this to you at once. I hate you because all my life -- that is half a century -- I have labored and suffered for you, day and night, to discover why you are unhappy, and whether it was possible to make a man, who was quite indifferent to me, happy. I have worked so hard that I can freely say harder than any man on earth. The result of it all is that all who have ever known me will either hate me or call me a speculator or an enthusiastic psychopathic visionary or what-not. This concerns me.

Further, what has this half century of my life given me? How did I conclude this life of suffering? Simply by colliding in my beloved motor car with a terrible crash against a century-old beautiful tree, growing on this side of the well known road Fontainebleau-Paris. And all would have ended if it were not for a chance, for one chance in a hundred -- and owing to this chance I remained alive, and now, half a man, vegetate in bed.

And so when after this misfortune my consciousness returned to me, yet my body, owing to various injuries from this misfortune, was unable to move, and it was impossible for me to think about current affairs; and at the same time, knowing medicine very well, my chances of remaining alive increased day by day, I, being free, began to think.

My thoughts, first of all, categorically proved to me that if I remain alive, it would be quite an exceptional case! After what has happened, still I can live! As according to all theories of probability, my life had to be finished either during my accident or during the period of struggle of the organism with life following this accident. It is why it can be said that my life has already ended.

But if I now remain alive it will be for me a new life, as if I were born again, with the difference that being born, so to say, again, I have the experience and memory of my former life. After such a reasoning, a question involuntarily arose in me:

How have I lived my former life, and is it worthwhile to live in the same way in my new life? And when I examined all this according to the results of my former life, I understood that in my former life I was an idiot of the Nth degree. That having very many possibilities, as hardly any man had ever had, to live well and in a bed of roses, a life always full of pleasures, I suffered voluntarily and endured what was unendurable for a man.

And after such reasoning I arrived at the decision, that in this new life of mine I will live only for that which will give me pleasure, that is, from this knowledge and experience which I by chance obtained in my former life.

And so I have now decided in this new life to live in a new way that is to say, I have made the following program:

As when I was worrying and suffering, you for example, my precious one, danced the fox trot, now I also want to dance the fox trot. But if we all will now dance the fox trot, then, as you know, the fox trot will firstly not be more interesting, and secondly, there will also be no more space left for dancing. It is why I have decided to escape from this difficulty in the following manner: that is, as you have already danced much and I not a single time, justice demands that now I dance and you do a little of what I have done all my life and what should be done so that our roles should be changed, about that I will see.

You remember in the beginning of this book I said that I tasted everything in my life, and it is why I can now do this also very well. But meanwhile as my state allows me only to write books, and afterwards ... well, we shall see, especially now when Beelzebub has become my friend. Yes, my precious buyer! I think that you also already know that for dancing the fox trot a great deal of money is necessary; and as you must also know, I have not this great deal of money. All the money which I had up to now, which I earned sweating until the seventh sweat, all this money I spent in my former stupid life on travels and searches to help those who were in need of money and other things, and at the present time I have not a single penny left. And at the same time, I don't want to have to earn money as I did in my former stupid life, and yet to dance the fox trot without money -- everyone who knows how to move their brains understands that money is necessary for it. And so this money I wish to have meanwhile through the selling of these books I am now writing.

What, you say that is a poor way of earning? No, my precious one, it seems to me that they will bring a good income. For example, you personally ... can you help not buying my books!?

TWO SPIRITS

Prieure, Feb 9, 1923

It is said in some ancient teachings that on the day God created man he also created for each man two spirits -- the spirit of good and the spirit of evil, or as they are called, an angel and a devil, and placed the angel on the right of man and the devil on the left.

Another ancient teaching says that when God sent spirits to work on the planets, the spirits asked God:

"What shall we do there?" God divided the spirits according to their qualities and said: "You, on the right, will try to lead those who live there to heaven, and you, the other half, will try to lead them to hell."

Then one of the leaders asked about the means permissible to those on the one side and those on the other. God answered: "You can use any methods and means you like. But there is one essential difference. Let the weapon of those on the right be -- to do through 'doing', and the weapon of those on the left -- to do through 'it happens'. The method of those on the right must be through what is active and conscious, and the method of those on the left through what is passive and unconscious."

These two teachings to which I refer are ancient. At the same time, parallel with these teachings there existed another religion, another teaching and it still exists to this day.

The majority of religions live, act, believe in accordance with holy scriptures, precepts and commandments. At the same time there has existed a teaching of learned followers who have tried to put into practice all religions, all sayings, all teachings without infatuation, without faith. They did not worship blindly. Before accepting something they practiced it. What could be put into practice was accepted, what could not be was rejected. In this way a new religion was formed, although the material for it was taken from other religions. The teaching about which I speak now is the teaching of the Sufis.

This teaching says the following about the angel and the devil:

Every action of a man, every step, every moment, every movement emanates either from the one or from the other. Emanations from both (result) are equally deposited in the human organism in the form of certain crusts of real tangible matter which one can examine and distinguish whether the crust is of one kind or another. Each crust obeys certain laws, leads to certain consequences. And in the case of man things whispered by the devil have a greater effect.

(Lecture interrupted.)

March 19 - April 1, 1923

Palm Sunday

Learn by heart the following words:

- 1) Fast
- 2) Prayer
- 3) Passion
- 4) Repentance
- 5) Confession
- 6) Communion
- 7) Forgiveness
- 8) Suffering
- 9) Tranquility
- 10) Death
- 11) Life

FAST: By itself fast has no meaning. Fasting is used as a means of altering our metabolism and consequently of altering the tempo of life and movement in us. Fasting is not for the sake of somebody, not in honor of any saint. Fasting is without exception for oneself. It is necessary to fast with an aim and intention. Nowadays fasts are usually undertaken in various religions as customs without meaning, without consciousness; they just fast because they have fasted before, but as to why and wherefore practically no one has thought. Such fasting is of no use and to fast in this way one must be a fool. It is said that fasting is cleansing. But one word is left out. It should be said: Fasting is a means of cleansing. The action of fasting is cleansing. But someone has to cleanse, not some saint. Fasting can be a means of cleansing if during the fast certain conscious measures are taken.

PRAYER: This is thinking in a certain definite direction, whatever it may be about. There are two kinds of prayer. There are two words for designating them. At present only one word is used. I do not know in what language to designate the other; it does not exist in Russian. Let us call it "X". Both these words are identical as regards action (in the sense of the action expressed by them). The difference is only in the quality of the action and the direction.

PASSION: Has anybody thought of what passion is and what is understood by this word? P.D., define the meaning of the word "passion". (Answer:) The meaning is two-fold. 1) in the sense of human passion, and 2) in the sense of suffering.

Actually it is neither. Passion is the name given to a certain activity. The words "the Passion of Our Lord" do not in any way correspond to the sense in which these words are currently understood. If you wish to formulate exactly the meaning of the word "passion" it can be done in two words. There is an expression in Russian: "The gnawings of conscience". The activity which takes place during the gnawings of conscience -- physiologically, mechanically, is a state called "passion". Both words -- human passions and the passion of Our Lord -- in their true meaning are one and the same. These words which we know well actually mean this state, and further, if someone manages to examine freely the circumstances for the description of which this word has been used, he will see that this word is used in a precise way and that no other word could be used there.

The explanation of this word will not be exact as long as we use it in the sense to which we are accustomed. We shall see that in similar descriptions, the word "passion" is applied to that state in us which is called the gnawings of conscience. So passion is the gnawings of conscience. Whoever understands the gnawings of conscience will understand the word "passion". To most people the taste of this function is unknown. For most people this state might not exist and they understand it only theoretically. For a final definition of the word "passion" it is necessary to add the word "similar" to the gnawings of conscience, since the expression of gnawings of conscience is used by us too often and we are accustomed to take its meaning too superficially. Passion is a state similar to the gnawings of conscience. REPENTANCE: In explaining to oneself the meaning of the word "passion" it is easy to confuse it with the word "repentance". The first is a process; the second (repentance) is the result of that activity.

CONFESSION: is understood by us as follows: We come to the priest, recount to him all our sins and through his mediation we receive forgiveness for them. Confession is something very good and very essential. It is impossible to do anything without confession, provided it is not used in the way it is done now. Confession has existed in all religions as an indispensable means for everything. Unfortunately long ago, very soon after the rise of the Christian religion, this activity was taken over by the police and became one of their surest methods, and so the original meaning of confession was forgotten. When in some places use of confession by the police ceased, then confession passed into the hands of the priests for obtaining money.

(If the Institute continues to exist, from tomorrow the official language of the Institute will be ancient Greek.)

Real Christians fasted in Lent in the following way: For the first three days they eat nothing. These three days are called after the founder of the Christian Pre-Easter Lent. It was St. Theodore who was the founder. During these three days they eat absolutely nothing, but woe to him who begins directly with the fast of St. Theodore. In actual fact Lent begins a week before this day. Thus it lasts not fifty but fifty-seven days. For a week before the fast of St. Theodore, Christians stop eating anything which may stick in the teeth. It is a meatless week.

When Lent is observed properly, for these fifty days no living thing is eaten, either of the air, of the earth or under the earth. Fish also may not be eaten. Fish may be eaten only twice throughout the whole of Lent. Of Orthodox Christians only the Russians eat fish in Lent. No Christians eat fish during Lent.

TRICKS

Prieure, 1923

So far our attention has been concentrated chiefly on movements.

Now movements will take a secondary place. We shall now study how to be able to produce various tricks, half-tricks and genuine phenomena which are called supernatural.

From the very first each of you is required, as a condition obligatory to all, never and in no case to divulge to anyone else, whether our own people, visitors, strangers or even his wife, what will be explained to him personally.

This point is very important also because the things which are to be practiced, tricks, half-tricks and genuine phenomena will look the same at a superficial glance to anyone who has no knowledge of such things. Only we shall know the difference. It is necessary to rack one's brains to try to discriminate between what is genuine and what is not genuine. This study is one of those things which teach us to be sharp-witted, to learn to discriminate between the true and the false and to cease being naive.

It is quite true that thought-reading is possible. It can be achieved by many different means and methods which may be genuine, half-tricks or tricks.

Many people have probably seen the so-called magnetic transference of thought. For instance, one of the well-known methods is to hold the other person's hand, look into his eyes and suggest. And indeed it is possible to suggest thoughts. There is another, unconscious transference from either side. He reads my thoughts only he does so not by thought but by muscular contraction. We shall call it half-trick. And there is yet another, when I suggest to another -- this is what we are now beginning to learn, the ABC. I have transmitted to him quietly and unobtrusively. It can be done almost without pressure. This is one of a thousand methods.

Things will be shown to everyone: to some -- tricks, to others genuine things. Each person will be learning. But no one must pass it on to others. Everyone must use his own brains, but only for himself.